

Guide to the Chengting Thomas Wang Papers

MS 1247



compiled by Leslie Koch

April 1982

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	5
Collection Contents	6
Selected Search Terms	7

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1247

CREATOR: Wang, Chengting Thomas, 1882-1961

TITLE: Chengting Thomas Wang papers

DATES: 1950-1983

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.75 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Manuscript biography of his life with particular emphasis on his career as a prominent official in the Chinese Nationalist government. Also included is a biographical article on Chengting Wang written by Vincent Liu and printed in the Biographical Journal.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1247>

Requesting Instructions

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Chengting Thomas Wang Papers (MS 1247). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Chengting T. Wang:

On returning to China from Yale, Wang became secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in Shanghai. Within a few months, however, he plunged into the turmoil of Chinese politics. He was active in the Revolution of 1911 which overthrew the Empire and helped draft the basic law on which the Republic was tentatively organized. In January 1912, he was elected a member of the Provisional Legislature and was chosen its Deputy Speaker. In February 1913, he was made Vice-Minister of Industry and Commerce and became Acting Minister of the same Board in May. When, in 1913, the first National Assembly of the Republic met in Peking, he was Vice-President Deputy Speaker of the Senate. In the ensuing struggle between the President, Yuan Shih-k'ai, and the majority party of the Assembly, Wang took sides against the President. In consequence, his life was in danger and he was among those unseated by the would-be dictator.

Then for two years, while out of public office, he found vent for his energies in social service as national secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association and in lecturing and church work. On the death of Yuan Shih-k'ai in 1916, the National Assembly dismissed by him reassembled, and Wang resumed his post of the Deputy Speaker of the Senate. Within about a year, in the vicissitudes of Chinese politics, the National Assembly was again dismissed, this time at the instance of a clique of military leaders in the North who inherited the traditions of Yuan. Thereupon a group of the Assemblymen, Wang among them, in protest against what they believed a retrograde and unconstitutional action, formed a government at Canton. In the autumn of 1918 Wang was sent by this government as its representative to the United States. The following year he was appointed a member of the official delegation which so ably presented the case of China at the Peace Conference at Paris. When eventually Japan became willing to withdraw from Shantung, Wang became (June 1922) China's ranking member of the joint Sino-Japanese commission which drew up the formal agreement. With these achievements as evidence of his ability in diplomacy, he became, in October 1922, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the following December was appointed to act as Premier.

In the rapid shifts of government in the next four years he was sometimes in office and sometimes out. Always he was striving for a stable regime and for the increase of the prestige of China in international affairs. During part of the time he handled the delicate and highly important negotiations with Soviet Russia and in March 1924, signed the preliminary agreement with Karakhan. Other posts held during these troubled years were Minister of Justice, member of the Educational Sinking Funds Commission, and chairman of the Customs Conference which prepared the way for the full recovery by China of her control over her own foreign tariff duties.

In 1927 he became director-general of the Lung-Hai Railway. In 1926 and 1927 the forces of the Kuomintang, of which he had long been a member, were successfully proceeding with the program of the unification

of China and were setting up the Nationalist Government at Nanking. In 1926 Wang became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance concurrently and in these positions gave astute and vigorous leadership in the negotiations for a revision of the treaties for the recovery of customs autonomy and the end of extraterritoriality. In the student agitation formented by the enemies of the Government during the Japanese operations in Manchuria in 1931, Wang was attacked by the mob and severely wounded. He resigned his post, but continued as a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang and in January, 1932, became state councilor of the Nationalist Government.

Along with his many political duties, Wang has found time to engage in business. He was the organizer of an import and export company, was the founder of the Hua Feng Cotton Mill Company at Woosung, and for a time was its managing director. Since 1926 he has been president, and beginning with 1932, general manger of the Liu Ho Kou Mining Company, Ltd. He has also taken an active part in many private or semi-public institutions and organizations of the assistance of China. He is president of China University (in Peiping) and a member of the board of directors of St. John's University, Futan University, and Nanking University. He has also been a director of the China International Famine Relief Commission, a member of the National Flood Relief Commission, chairman of the finance committee of the United Philanthropic Associations of Shanghai, a member of the Standing Committee of the China Aviation League, and president of the China Good Roads Movement Association and the Pan-Pacific Association. He belongs to the Chinese Episocopal Church.

He also has found time for the preparation of many articles for Chinese and foreign magazines and newspapers, and in 1933 some of his addresses of the previous ten years were published (in Chinese) by the Modern Book Company of Shanghai. Among his honors are an LL.D. From Peiping University (1917) and from St. John's University (1920), the First Class Tashou Chiaho decoration (1922), the First Class Tashou Paokuang Chiaho (1922), and the First Class Wenu (1923).

Exerpted from the biography of Chengting T. Wang which appeared in the twenty-fifth year record of the Class of 1910, Yale College.

Scope and Contents

The Chengting Thomas Wang papers consist of the original manuscript of his autobiography, "Looking Back and Looking Forward," together with electrostatic and typed copies. The memoir largely relates to his career as a prominent official in the Chinese Nationalist government and concludes in the 1950s after the Nationalist government moved to Taiwan. A biographical article on Wang (in Chinese) by Vincent Liu, his son-in-law, and material related to the presentation of the manuscript to the Yale University Library on April 3, 1981 are also included.

The papers were the gift of Anfu Wang Liu, daughter of Chengting T. Wang.

Collection Contents

Looking Back and Looking Forward, manuscript

b. 1, f. 1 Prologue, pp. 1-28

b. 1, f. 2 pp. 29-98

b. 1, f. 3 pp. 99-174

b. 1, f. 4 pp. 175-265

b. 1, f. 5 pp. 266-345

b. 1, f. 6 pp. 346-414

b. 1, f. 7 pp. 415-502

b. 1, f. 8 pp. 503-562

Looking Back and Looking Forward, electrostatic copy

b. 1, f. 9 pp. 1-164

b. 1, f. 10 pp. 165-376

b. 1, f. 11 pp. 377-562

Looking Back and Looking Forward, typescript

b. 2, f. 12 Chapters 1-12

b. 2, f. 13 Chapters 13-25

b. 2, f. 14 Anfu Wang Liu, speech, April 3, 1981, on presentation of *Looking Back and Looking Forward* manuscript to Yale University Library; two copies

b. 2, f. 15 Chengting T. Wang, *The Biographical Journal*, with an article by Vincent Liu (printed; Chinese); two copies

b. 2, f. 16 Wang, Chengting T. *The Biographical Journal*, with an article by Vincent Liu [printed in Chinese]; Feb 1983

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Geographic Names

China -- Politics and government

Genres / Formats

Autobiographies (documents)

Subjects

Diplomats

Names

Liu, Vincent

Wang, Chengting Thomas, 1882-1961